settlements on the east bank and along the lower reaches of the Sobat. Their country is treeless savannah but, unlike their cousins the Nuer and Dinka, they are predominantly agricultural and sedentary, for their long river frontage gives them adequate water and grazing in the dry season for the comparatively few cattle (about 25,000) they possess.[1] The brief account I give of their social structure is mostly derived from articles in *Sudan Notes and Records* by Mr Pumphrey and Mr Howell.[2]

The hamlets (*myer*, sing. *pac*), built from 100 yards to a mile or so apart on high ground parallel to the river, vary in size from one to fifty homesteads; a homestead (*gol*), the residence of a family (*gol*), consisting usually of two huts encircled by a fence. Each hamlet is occupied by members of an extended family, or small lineage, with their wives, and the homesteads of this group are arranged in a rough horseshoe shape around a common cattle-byre, which shelters the animals in the rains and is used as a club at all seasons, and a common kraal. The headman of a hamlet (*jal dwong pac*) who is also the head of a lineage in

[1] I am indebted to Mr John Donald of the Sudan Political Service for the most recent figures of human and bovine population.
[2] M. E. C. Pumphrey, 'The Shilluk Tribe', *S.N. and R.* (1941); P. P. Howell, 'The Shilluk Settlement', *ibid.* (1941).

2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
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when the mosquitoes are really bad the cattle are tied for the night in the open, generally in the centre of the village. Fires of dried cow-dung are kept smouldering all night, and the herdsmen smear themselves with the ashes. In the dry season when the grass gives out the young men and boys drive the cattle long distances to fresh pastures; the Shilluk of the White Nile cross to the eastern bank, those of the Sobat migrate to the lagoons to the south of Sobat.

Fish are speared and trapped, and the hippopotamus, the flesh of which is greatly esteemed, is harpooned. The Shilluk, who are by no means expert trackers, hunt by surrounding an area and spearing the animals as they attempt to escape from the contracting circle, but game procured in this manner plays only a small part in their diet.

The Shilluk are excellent craftsmen. The thatching of the royal shrines and those of Nyakang is perhaps the best in the riverain portion of the Sudan, and this applies equally to their iron work, though they do not extract the metal from the ore but obtain it by trade—formerly from the Dinka, now from the white man. Their spears are the best that we saw in the southern Sudan. There is no special group of smiths, and iron-workers are not despised. They make good but not remarkable pottery. Their dug-out canoes are necessarily small, as the only wood is the *doleib* palm (*Borassus flabellifer*). In the north, where other wood is available in small quantities, the sides of the canoe are commonly heightened by built-on strips; possibly this practice is modern, but it is not absolutely new, as we noted it more than twenty years ago. Besides canoes, the Shilluk make small rafts of ambatch which resemble the reed rafts of the ancient Egyptians.

Regulation of Public Life

The Shilluk king is absolute head—temporal and spiritual—of a state whose territory is divided into a number of provinces, each administered by a chief directly responsible to the sovereign and acting as his proxy. We are indebted to Mr. Heasty for the following account of the areas into which the country is divided. The two main divisions are Lwak and Gar. The former comprises all the country south of and including the capital Fashoda, with its provincial capital Kwom, and here resides one of the great territorial chiefs mentioned

3:Westermann E-5 (1910) 1912 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

the hottest month of the year. June to September constitutes the rainy season, and from October to December the larger part of the country is flooded with water, but the marshes and smaller Khors[1] all dry up by April. From November to April the climate is not unhealthy for Europeans. During the wet season mosquitoes are numerous. Malaria and black water fever are the diseases most dangerous to white people.

SOIL. The country is a plain with only inconsiderable elevations, on which the villages of the natives are built. The soil is black and fertile near the river and the khors, back from the water courses it is in most places poorer, sometimes sandy.

VEGETATION The chief vegetation is high grass, interspersed with shrubs. A light forest of species trees is found mainly along the Nile. The acacia is the chief representative of the tree-flora: laglig (Balanites aegyptiaca), sont-acacia (Acacia arabica), Talh (Acacia Seyal), different kinds of gum-acacias, etc. A characteristic feature of the landscape are groups of dolaib- and dom-palms (Borassus flabelliformis and Hyphaene Thebaica); a beautiful tree is the mahogany tree (Khaya senegalensis); it is most useful as timber, but seems to be rather rare in the Shilluk country; other notable trees are: different kinds of Ficus (Sycomore fig), the ardeib tree (Tamarindus indica), nabag (a fruit tree) etc. The vegetation on the river is most luxuriant. Though this is not the region of the sudd, yet the river is at most times largely covered with single plants and swimming islands, formed of papyrus, ambach (Herminiera Elaphroxylon), several kinds of reeds, lotus, Umm *Sof* (Vossia procera), Potamogeton, Ottelia, and many others. The floating vegetation often serves birds for a fishing place. Trees are much hampered in their growth by the fires which the natives light while the grass is dry; the reason for burning the grass is to hunt up game, and to get the ground cleared for cultivation.

ANIMALS The country being thickly populated, game is not very numerous. But at some distance from the settlements large animals are still frequent, chiefly near the river towards Lake No; the neighbourhood of Kaka and north of it are also rich in game. Elephants, giraffes, buffaloes are met with, though not very frequently; antelopes and gazelles abound: bushbuck (Tragelaphus scriptus), reedbuck (Cervicapra bohor), white-eared cob (Cobus leucotis), ariel (Gazella soemmeringi), dorcas (G. dorcas), isabelline gazelle (G. isabella), oryx, waterbuck (Cobus defassa), Mrs. Gray's waterbuck (Cobus maria), gazelle rubifrons, roan antelope (Hippotragus equinus bakeri), hartebeest (Bubalis jacksoni), tiang or Bastard Hartebeest (Damaliscus tiang), Orbi antelope (Ourebia) etc. Of the carnivorous family the most notable are: lion, leopard, jackal, hyena, fox, Zorilla (a little black-and-white animal resembling the American skunk),

[1] Khor (Arab) — water course drying up in the rainless season.

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1. Shilluk Girls showing the way they wear the skin dress
2. Lotus flower along the Sobat River

[FACING p. XLVIII (A)]

Some Observations of a Fieldtrip among the Shilluk

Mohamed Riad

131 The Shilluk occupy a country that extends from 10°45' N. to 9°15' N latitude. Particularly the west bank of the WHITE NILE from about 50 kilometers north of Kaka to approximately 50 kilometers east of Lake No. There is also a Shilluk pocket within Northern Dinkaland. Thus they occupy the right bank of the White Nile from near Kodok to the confluence of the Sobat. They also extend some 60 kilometers up the Sobat river, mainly on its northern bank.

361 The Shilluk settlements, if they can be called villages, are situated from about half a kilometer to a kilometer off the river bank giving the impression of beads hung on a string(1). Also, on the banks of the khors i.e. seasonal streams which discharge into the Nile, rising from the west or east and sloping toward the Nile, Shilluk settlements are to be found. The breadth of the Shilluk land does not exceed a five hour march from the banks [311] of the river(2) and there is a no-man's land which stretches back to the west till the Nuba-hills. This is used as a dry season (winter) grazing land by both Shilluk and nomad Bagara Arabs, but the Shilluk do not, as a rule, pasture their cattle so far to the west. This area is quite well-known only in those areas where roads go up from the river banks to the Nuba mountains. 133 The hydrology of this area is not known although some khors intersect it with courses estimated as parallel to the Nile and joining other khors to discharge seasonal waters into the Nile north of Kaka.

[171 The Nile is the main waterway in the Shilluk land and because the Shilluk have a comparatively long water front they are the most skilled 226] fishermen of the Nilotic group. The most important khor is one called Collo which takes its waters from the Nile, or more precisely from the bank-swamps against Malakal and runs parallel to the Nile separated from it only by a stretch of comparatively high bank, one to three kilometers broad, and then discharges again in the Nile south of Kodok. Again there is another khor called khor Arepejar which rises from the west and discharges into the Collo. (3) This khor is of almost no hydrological importance, but of a great significance in the realm of Shilluk cosmology and spiritual thinking. This khor is [79 the boundary between the two religious provinces into which Shillukland is 63] divided. On its banks one of the important rites of king installation takes place.

132 The Shilluk country is more or less a flat land covered with Savannah grass and with occasional clusters of trees, mainly along river 133 and khor banks. The most famous tree is the Doleb(Borrassus aethiopum) ●137 which grows in beautiful groves on the Nile banks. The rainy season begins in May but occasional showers heralding the rains occur at the end of March and early April. The dry season begins near the end of October. Rainfall is heaviest in the south. Here is the mean annual rainfall at our stations:-

Fangak (9°3'N) 1187 mm
Malakal (9°32') 737 mm
Kodok (9°55') 682 mm
Renk (11°45') 506 mm